

DECEMBER 1995

# RADIO AMATEURS OF CANADA

MONTHLY NEWS BULLETIN

## SURVIVAL, THE SEQUEL!

Following my two editorials of last month on the survival of the amateur radio hobby, I have received some very "interesting" comments from many quarters. It would be impossible for me to reproduce all of them. One message from **VE1ELK** pointed out the fact that *Industry Canada* will be "devolving" some of its work to RAC. In fact this devolution will be done through a new corporation operating at arms length from RAC.

This is nothing new, many governments worldwide are doing the same thing: using one, and only one, "national" organization to do the work done by one department for a very specific group of users, in our case the amateur radio operators. Governments are getting out of certain areas in order to save money and spend money for the "good of all the population", and not of a small group. This is happening for the amateur radio operations in South Africa, there are similar rumblings in the USA with the ARRL being the "chosen" organization. In Canada, even with RAC having only a membership of 18% of the all the hams, *Industry Canada* considers this organization to be "representative" of all the Canadian amateur operators. It is important for the ham community to rally behind RAC, become members of the association and participate in its operations. *Industry Canada* has no intention whatsoever of withdrawing its decision to contract out some of the services that it presently offers free of charge to the ham community. We had better get used to this type of government operation!

Some of the comments received over the past few weeks have been most illuminating and it is apparent that some members still believe that it may be possible to form "another" national association and then become the "chosen" national organization. If RAC cannot entice (coerce!) more than 18% of the Canadian amateurs to become members of the association, I really cannot see how a new association can even think of getting better numbers in a very short time before the devolution of some of *Industry Canada* services become a new fact of life in 1996.

I have read some grumbling about the composition of the RAC Board. Elections have been held in all regions since the formation of RAC. From the results that I have seen, the present incumbents have won fair and square in all

regions, **BUT** the percentage of returned and valid ballots is nothing to be proud off! In the last electoral round the highest percentage of valid returned ballots from one region was 59%... This is poor, very poor. If you feel strongly enough that the RAC Board has to be changed and that new blood has to be injected into the organization, please ensure that you nominate and/or support new young candidates for the next round of election and return your valid ballots.

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## “MONTHLY BULLETIN” DISTRIBUTION

Over the last few years the distribution of this Monthly Bulletin has taken many routes and followed many circuitous paths. Because of the time and the efforts involved in the distribution, it has become necessary to review the distribution networks of this publication and try to rationalize the efforts of all the volunteers involved.

Steve, **VE3GRS**, and I have listed all the distribution modes that we “think” are being used and they are listed below:

1. Hard copies are mailed from RAC Headquarters to a list of subscribers upon payment of the nominal annual fee.
2. E-mail directly to individuals. Steve has advised me that there are presently more than 150 addresses on his mailing list. It would appear that this mode of distribution became necessary because of the unavailability of suitable and/or reliable packet connections in certain areas.
3. Packet network. The Bulletin is sent across Canada and part of the USA each month.
4. The Internet Newsgroups. The RAC Monthly Bulletin is inserted in many Newsgroups for worldwide distribution.
5. Finally, for the last few months, the Bulletin is inserted in the RAC Home Page on the World Wide Web. (Check <http://www.rac.ca> )

It is felt that presently there is a serious duplication of effort in this very elaborate distribution network. Every month there are more than 20 volunteer-hours devoted, by many individuals, strictly to the distribution of the Bulletin by mail, E-mail, packet, Internet Newsgroups, and the World Wide Web. I personally consider this amount excessive.

The number of available “volunteer” hours is seriously decreasing, as employers are asking “more for less,” from the employees, thus it is important that we budget and spend those “free” hours as frugally and as efficiently as possible to better serve the membership. Lets not forget, without the “volunteers” not only the Bulletin but many of RAC’s other services would not be available.

This should be kept in mind the next time you feel like harassing or giving a piece of your mind to a volunteer!

“Flaming of volunteers is unacceptable”

Below is a survey that, with your help, will help us better understand how we should efficiently distribute the Bulletin and what changes are to be made starting with the 1996/97 season.

- A. Hard copy distribution. We have a list of current hard copy receivers. If you are a "hard copy" subscriber/receiver", please advise the RAC office if you will still require hard copy distribution service after September 1996 as being your **ONLY** avenue to receive the Bulletin.
- B. E-mail **ONLY** recipients should advise Steve **VE3GRS** at **cutways@qucdn.queensu.ca** if they still require monthly a personal copy of the Bulletin because there is no other way for them to secure a copy of the Bulletin in a timely fashion.
- C. Packet recipients **ONLY** should send a short message to **VA3RAC@VE3CDY** and state clearly that the packet distribution mode for the Bulletin is their only reliable distribution mode available.
- D. If you get the Bulletin **ONLY** on the Internet Newsgroups, please send a short message to **VE3VIA** at: **monitor@limestone.kosone.com** stating that the Internet Newsgroups is your only means of securing a copy of the Bulletin, and specify which Newsgroup you use.
- E. If your **ONLY** mode of accessing the Bulletin is via the Radio Amateurs of Canada Home Page on Internet, please advise Neil Herber, **VE3PUE**, at **nherber@igs.net** clearly stating this fact.
- F. If you get the Bulletin via more than one mode described above, please send a message to **VE3GRS** or **VE3VIA** or **VE3PUE** (see above for the addresses) stating exactly by which modes the Bulletin is reliably reaching you and which mode you would prefer be retained for **your** delivery.
- G. Finally, to all recipients: what should be the regular content of the Monthly Bulletin?

We are expecting to receive all your answers no later than March 1st 1996, so that the Executive can decide what will be done for the next Bulletin's season. We will have the results of this survey and a list of the decisions that will be implemented during the next season in the June 1996 issue of the Bulletin, the last issue of the present season.

It is very important that we get as many answers as possible, and not only from RAC members, so that the proper decisions made will reflect the requirements of all Canadian Amateurs or readers/users of the Bulletin.

## NEW RAC SECRETARY

The Board of Directors of Radio Amateurs of Canada announces the appointment of Mr. Henry Tait, **VE7FYU**, as **Secretary** effective January 1, 1996. Mr. Tait will replace Mr. Kenneth Pulfer, **VE3PU**, who will remain as RAC Treasurer. Mr. Pulfer as a member of the national executive, a member of several RAC working and advisory committees, and as a member of the Amateur Radio Working Group negotiation with Industry Canada, will continue in those important roles.

Henry Tait, **VE7FYU**, has been an amateur since 1988, and is an active member of the North Shore Amateur Radio Club where he has served in various Board and Executive capacities. Mr. Tait is a Delegated Examiner, a member of the B.C. Provincial Emergency Program (PEP), and is active on VHF and HF DX.

Mr. Tait, a native of Vancouver and a retiree of Westcoast Energy, Inc., brings many years of experience in the field of management and accounting to the RAC national executive.

## RAC ON INTERNET

Neil Herber, **VE3PUE**, has been the technical illustrator for TCA for some years and many of you have commented on the excellent job that he has been doing. Neil has recently been "persuaded" to look after "The Reading Room" in the RAC homepage on the Internet. He will look after the TCA page, the Web copy of the Bulletin and the "What's New" page on the Web.

Over the next few months, new items have or will be included in the RAC site on Internet such as the draft band plans for 6 metre, 220 MHz and others, a list of all the Canadian Amateur Clubs, some Industry Canada documentation and a callsign database. So if you have access to the Internet do not forget to check: <http://www.rac.ca>

## RCI SHORT-WAVING GOODBYE

December 12, 1995.. This is from The Globe and Mail Web site..

"MONTREAL -- Employees of **Radio Canada International**, the short-wave voice of Canada abroad, received notice on Tuesday that the service would definitely be closing by March 31, 1996.

RCI employees, in anticipation of the cuts, have been lobbying the federal government to step in and save the service, which broadcasts in eight languages in more than 126 countries. But the CBC, which contributes half of RCI's annual \$16.5-million budget, announced Tuesday it would no longer be able to fund the broadcaster for another fiscal year.

The Foreign Affairs Department has funded the other half of the RCI budget during the past year. Foreign Affairs Minister Andre Ouellet threw the ball back into the cash-strapped CBC's court on Tuesday, saying it was up to them to decide the fate of RCI. "The previous government decided to transfer part of the budget to External Affairs in order to allow RCI to continue," Ouellet said. "My department no longer has the budget to do this."

But RCI employees say the federal government has a responsibility to safeguard the service, which promotes Canada abroad and helps communicate with Canadian Forces contingents, among other things."

### From the editor's desk.

Many of the amateur radio operators have had their first contact with the hobby by listening to the overseas broadcasters: BBC, Radio Australia, Radio South Africa to name a few. As the new technology comes on line such as direct satellite broadcasting or simply international broadcasters' programming available on regular satellite line up, many international broadcasters have deserted or are planning to desert the shortwave in favour of this new technology. In my opinion, it is a major retrograde measure.

Suddenly the shortwave broadcasters have become "international broadcasters"! That is what they were at all times, it happened that the only means of broadcasting the message was via shortwaves. Today, not all the

listeners of these international broadcasters have the pecuniary means to buy satellite receiving equipment or to be located in an area that is served by cable radio. To relinquish shortwave solely in favour of satellite transmission, or to use TV to broadcast the Canadian message abroad, as one Canadian Minister was alluding to during an interview a few days ago, is not a very rational decision.

If satellite broadcasting and/or TV was such a great medium to reach the "world", why are many well established international broadcasters spending large amounts of money to upgrade their shortwave transmission systems. I am thinking of VOA (Voice of America) opening new stations in Sri Lanka, Thailand and upgrading the Morocco station, RFI (Radio France International) upgrading their present installations worldwide and looking to establish new relay station(s) in the Middle and Far East, and spending very large sums of money in the process. Do these international broadcasters know something that RCI does not know or does not wish to listen to? Maybe we should ask them for their rationale!

Hopefully, if RCI is finally laid to rest after a prolong agony of many years, someone with far reaching views will purchase and preserve the transmission facilities of RCI in Sackville, New Brunswick. The Sackville plant is a facility that is technically considered as one of, if not, the most desirable shortwave transmitter site in the world, and to let it die and rust away would be a crime. Many overseas broadcasters are already using this facility to cover North America. Why not market it more aggressively and keep it open for the return of RCI when it becomes politically necessary to revive the overseas services of Radio Canada International.

## THE CANADIAN AMATEUR, JANUARY 1996

The cover of the January issue of The Canadian Amateur features Percy, **VE7DQA**, the lightkeeper at Trial Island, BC. More details on Percy and his operations are given feature treatment inside the January issue.

The January TCA also contains more debate and exchange of views on the CW issue, a follow up on the successful September operation of **CY3IARU** in Niagara Falls, the involvement of several Edmonton-area Amateurs in a dramatic Coast Guard rescue, Saskatchewan Amateurs rallying to assist with communications at the Regina Grey Cup, Ottawa-area hams providing communications for a Guinness record heavy horse pull, and **VE6ITV**'s well-publicized November QSO with Maj. Chris Hadfield, **VA3OOG**, on the Shuttle Atlantis.

There are also construction details for a 2 metre "Clover Quad," RAC news updates, the involvement of Toronto students in fabricating parts for the AMSAT satellite, and details of how **VE3QDR**, the Durham Region QRP Club, took top points in Canadian Field Day standings.

All this plus ads chock-full of goodies from your favourite suppliers, Feedback letters, Silent Keys, regular columns, contest and DX reports, HF propagation forecasts, satellites, packet radio, club news, YL News, QUA, Public Service/ARES, Section News, bench and homebrewing tips, antenna design, a Coming Events calendar for the new year, and the Swap Shop - all in the January issue of The Canadian Amateur, coming to your mailbox soon.



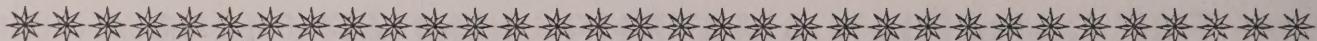
*MERRY CHRISTMAS*

*AND A*

*HAPPY NEW YEAR*

*from the Bulletin crew*

*Let's hope that the sun cooperates in 1996 and that the DX paths open up again.*



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